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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 006261

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2013

TAGS: KPAL LE PGOV PREL PTER SY JO JY

SUBJECT: JORDAN'S AMB. IN SYRIA ON TERRORISM IN IRAQ, HAMAS AND BLACK SEPTEMBER

Classified By: Amb. Edward W. Gnehm for reasons 1.5 (b)(d)

SUMMARY

¶11. (C) An Embassy contact outlined for us a recent meeting he had with Jordan's Ambassador in Syria. The Ambassador worried about the flow of terrorists from Syria into Iraq, and pressure he feels to permit old Palestinian fedayeen into Jordan. End Summary.

AMB. ARABIAT LINKS SYRIA WITH TERRORISTS ENTERING IRAQ

¶12. (C) Issa Michael Matalka, Director for both the Middle East Forum and the Investigative Project, relayed to us a conversation with Shaker Arabiat, the Jordanian Ambassador in Damascus. Matalka met Amb. Arabiat on September 23 and discussed his views on Iraq and Syria. According to Amb. Arabiat, the main threat to Iraq comes from its long border with neighboring Syria. Arabiat believes that members of terrorist organizations like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (based in Lebanon and Syria), Hezbollah, and mujahideen from Palestinian camps in both Lebanon and Syria as well as from Algeria, Sudan and even Afghanistan are entering Iraq from its porous border with Syria to conduct terrorist attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq.

PALESTINIANS WANT TO COME HOME TO JORDAN

¶13. (C) Amb. Arabiat told Matalka that another serious problem he is facing in Damascus are requests to return to Jordan as many as 10,000 members of the terrorist group "Black September" who fought the Jordanian army in 1970 and eventually fled to Syria. They consider themselves Jordanian citizens and many now wish to return to Jordan and settle here with their families. The GOJ considers some to be very dangerous and responsible for several terrorist attacks in Jordan and elsewhere in the 70s. Amb. Arabiat said he has been visited often at the Jordanian Embassy in Damascus by Hamas Political Bureau president Khalid Mishal and Dr. Musa Abu Marzouk seeking renewal of their Jordanian passports but he has refused their requests several times.

AMB. ARABIAT'S VIEWS ON SYRIA

¶14. (C) Amb. Arabiat told Matalka that Syria continues to be controlled by the "old guard", who still wield the power under President Bashar Asad. He considers Syria to be a dangerous, pro-terrorist country, with far to go in its efforts to change its "sponsor of terrorism" image.

COMMENT

¶15. (C) Matalka has been a periodic but good source of information on human rights cases. Shaker Arabiat, who we know well from his service in the Jordanian MFA in Amman, is a professional and a good analyst. His views on Syria and Iraq are consistent with those held by the King and his senior security advisors.
GNEHM